

Manuel "Manny" Hernandez
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Sacramento, CA 96831

April 13, 2015

History Social Studies Framework Committee
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 3207
Sacramento, CA 95814

Attention: Ken McDonald

Dear Framework Committee:

I strongly recommend revising the current History/Social Studies Framework to include a more complete recording of the contributions by the largest population group in our state to the history of California and the nation. Latinos and Mexican Americans comprise 39% of the state's population and 52% of the public school students in California.

I am a former inner-city school board member (Sacramento City USD: 1996-2008) who saw the many shortcomings affecting our city's school districts and heard about these same problems in inner-city schools and rural schools throughout the state. These shortcomings include family economic challenges, teacher inexperience, and the lack of school books and equipment by inner-city and Latino children and young people.

As a result of these obstacles and others, inner-city and Latino children have higher drop-out rates, fewer enrollments in challenging classes (such as AP courses), higher suspension and other disciplinary actions, and lower graduation rates. I have observed that our state's curriculum for history and social studies is particularly weak in teaching about the contributions of Mexican Americans and other Latinos.

It is vital that all students learn about their history; especially the students who comprise the larger population groups. Without this knowledge, students not only fail to know about the previous generations' contributions, but they doubt and sometimes devalue their own self-worth.

One example of a historical event that illustrates the contributions of Mexican Americans to California's history and social studies is the following: At page 351, Line 2014, amend the framework to include material regarding the 1960's:

On March 1, 1968, Mexican American high school students walked out of their schools in Los Angeles to protest poor and inadequate educational conditions. At that time, schools on the East side of Los Angeles were largely segregated with high rates of school dropouts. High schools serving Mexican American students had been neglected by the

Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) for some time. By week's end, 10,000 high school and middle school students had joined the Walkouts. The students outlined a list of demands which they presented to the LAUSD Board of Education. Some of these demands included: the hiring of Chicana/o teachers and administrators, formation of Mexican American Studies courses, culturally sensitive teachers, and bilingual education. These students were asking for improved education. The students were met by police beatings. When the parents of the students saw that the Los Angeles Police Department began beating and arresting peaceful demonstrators, it spurred them to action and they began to add pressure to the LAUSD as well. Up until this point, few young Chicanos/as had engaged in this type of demonstration.

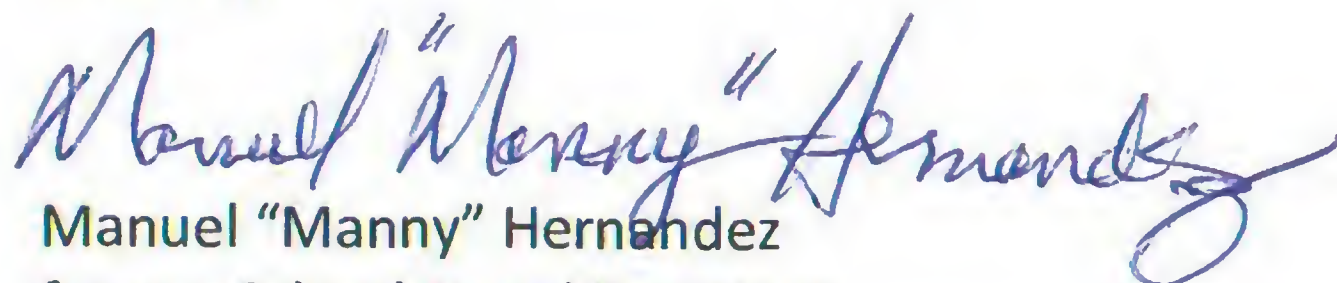
The contributions of Mexican Americans and Latinos are vital to the establishment of our great state; from the early native civilizations in the Americas, to the early settlements in California, to the importance of California as a free state during the Civil War, to the contributions in education and labor rights, and the defense of the nation during world wars. These contributions and many others should be included in the framework for history and social studies.

There is a corrosive effect to delaying or short-changing the vital contributions by major population groups in our official history. There is no group that is more important than the Latino population to the history of California. Please take immediate action to reflect this importance in the history and social studies curriculum.

I am requesting confirmation of receipt of this letter by your Committee.

Thank you for your attention to this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Manuel 'Manny' Hernandez". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping 'M' and a long, trailing flourish at the end.

Manuel "Manny" Hernandez
former School Board President
Sacramento City Unified School District